

Disclaimer: All of this is based upon the lovely J.K. Rowling's work. I own nothing except Salazar's wife, son, and various other original characters. This story is an AU of sixth year, but it will contain a few spoilers from Half-Blood Prince and Deathly Hallows. However, it will still seriously diverge from canon.

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For the Kaleah, who never had the chance.

Prologue: History is not what it Seems

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry: Late Winter, 963 A.D.

Two figures moved rapidly down a long corridor, one slightly in the lead. Their cloaks billowed behind them as they passed door after countless door. The first absentmindedly whistled to himself as he went, running his hand through his shoulder-length hair that refused to lie flat. His face sparked with amusement in the faint light, lips drawn into a ghost of a mischievous smile as he passed a flickering torch and a few snoozing suits of armor.

"Honestly, Godric!" he stated with a faint Celtic accent, smoothing his dark hair once more. "I am not saying that all Muggles or Muggleborns are evil!" He gestured for emphasis. "I just think that we need to be wary of their religion. Most of them believe that we are

some kind of demon spawn that will steal their souls.” He frowned, one of the portraits gazing at him oddly and then snorting.

“Really, Sal?” his companion intoned with a hint of sarcasm. He shot the offending picture a look before spelling it asleep with a wave of his hand.

“Yes, really,” Sal responded fiercely, walking faster now. “They are taught that magic is... that all magic is evil.” He shivered at the very thought.

“Humph.” Godric made a face that his friend didn’t see. His dirty, golden eyes gleamed in clear disbelief.

The two stopped at a heavy wooden door, which quietly opened with a single touch from Sal. He took a step inside but halted in front of the doorway. With a flick of his fingers, light filled the room, and he turned to his companion.

“Most Muggleborns think that they are a demon incarnate. They try to hide or – even worse – suppress their magic,” Sal stated, crossing his arms over his chest defensively. “Surely, you have noticed that when we go look for students among the Muggles that there are barely any! And further, the ones who we do find are far too afraid to accept their magic. They simply pretend that it doesn’t even exist. They know that if they show their powers, their own families would disown them... at the very least! Truthfully, they’d most likely be killed!”

Godric brushed a slightly shaky hand over his robes and commented dismissively, “We do not find many students because there is very little magic in their kind.” He stepped into the room, eyes narrowing into slits. “That’s why they are Muggles!”

His gaze flickered from his friend to the room surrounding them, briefly lingering on the desks that sat neatly in rows and at the wooden shelves on the walls. He almost seemed to be discreetly searching for something. Almost checking out his surroundings.

The dark-haired man studied Godric for a moment, a strange look flashing across his face. But he continued as if he hadn't heard the other's outburst.

"And I am worried about these attacks that have been happening at the local villages as of late. They seem to be magical in nature. This is doing nothing to dispel the locals of their fear," Sal added after a moment. "Many of them are fleeing, but there is a chance that those remaining will try to retaliate." He shook his head. "I asked Siobhan to stop visiting. It's just too dangerous anymore, but I fear that she will do it regardless." Sal's face filled with worry as he fingered the silver and gold band on his left hand.

"Well, that may be true," Godric allowed very slowly. "However, we will not have to worry about that here." His hands trembled for an instant before he quickly hid them in his pockets. The man's eyes began to noticeably water.

"Yes, Hogwarts is safe." Sal's face softened and smoothed. He glanced around the room and smiled pleasantly. "It took us years to build this place, but I am so very glad that we did, even though it felt like centuries." He paused, something occurring to him. "You know, old friend--"

"Enough, Sal!" Godric interrupted.

He glanced around nervously before zeroing in on a particular object, what appeared to be an amulet of some kind. It was a small and shimmering blue with a bizarre metallic design overlaid. The artifact was situated on a shelf in a darkened corner and was concealed by a thick book, looking to all the world as if it had been purposely hidden there.

The man allowed a tiny smile to grace his face, even as he clenched his hands tensely. "Back to the topic at hand," he ordered, "the one we were speaking of before your little tirade about Muggles."

"Oh, yes." Sal ignored the interruption as though it were a common occurrence. "Rowena said that she left here after showing it to some of the seniors. She just wasn't sure where, although it is probably on

one of the shelves.” His gaze roamed around the room. “We really shouldn’t leave this thing just lying around. It does have some powerful defensive spells... as you undoubtedly recall. A student might be severely hurt if they attempted to even touch it.” His lips quirked for an instant, like he was silently laughing.

“True,” added Godric distractedly, missing the jibe. He blinked, watery eyes shifting back to Sal, who was standing beside him, still searching. He tightened his hands again, and sweat started to form above his brow, plastering blond hair to his forehead. Something in him twitched anxiously, unhappily, but he fiercely shoved it away.

“At least, it was left in a classroom, not in the Great Hall. It would be a nightmare to look for it there.” Another grin tugged the corners of Sal’s mouth. “Perhaps we should find a permanent place for it. Or do you think one of us should keep it?” he asked, again turning to his companion.

“I suppose,” the other man answered absentmindedly, not even really listening. His belly twisted in a very unpleasant manner.

Sal nodded. He remained silent as he turned back toward the room with a pensive look on his face, momentarily forgetting his search.

Godric’s already trembling hands began to sweat as well. And he repeatedly clenched and unclenched his fingers. His gaze flicked from Sal to the amulet and back again, wondering why it was taking the bloody fool so damn long. The thing was right there!

“Hm... Helga would probably be the best for the job. She has a delicate touch that won’t interfere with any of its magic,” Sal murmured aloud after a few heartbeats. “Or possibly Rowena,” he went on. “She is rather fond of blue.” He snickered to himself and idly resumed his searching, still thinking over the problem.

His friend merely nodded his head and tried to stop the shaking in his hands. His stomach twisted once more, heart beating painfully in his chest.

“Ah!” Suddenly, Sal’s eyes stopped. “There it is!”

He nimbly sidestepped Godric and walked toward the amulet. As he meandered between the tables and chairs, Godric stealthily followed, right hand silently going to an inner pocket of his blood-red robes.

“Finally,” Sal quipped as he approached the shelf, not even looking to see if his friend had followed.

Behind him, Godric’s hand effortlessly pulled free a thin, silver object.

“You’d think that there was some kind of Invisibility charm on this.” Sal laughed, even as he peered intently at the amulet.

The blue of the stone ebbed and flowed like water. Its color darkened from sapphire to cobalt, so dark it was almost black. The metal shimmered from silvery to golden and back. The engraved animal quietly yawning and stretching as though it had just woken up from a nap.

“Still, back to what I said before, I’m worried about these attacks,” Salazar inserted as he rubbed his chin. “I think we should find the culprit. That would do a lot to help ease tensions.” He gently took the amulet off the shelf and moved to place it in his robes.

“I already know who is responsible,” Godric answered quietly, continuing to creep after his companion.

Sal abruptly froze, fingers inches from his robe. “You do?” His face registered disbelief. And a sense of dread tingled down his spine as the amulet burned fiercely in his hand.

“Yes,” a voice whispered in his ear.

Sal whirled around, but it was too late. Unexpectedly, he was thrown back into the wall, pain exploding first in his back and then his head. Stars burst in front of his eyes as all the air was forced from his lungs. There was a sudden, sharp pain near his heart followed by the odd sensation of a heavy liquid flooding down his chest. His shocked eyes took a moment to focus, and he stared down as a silver blade was removed from between his ribs. The runic carvings on the surface

now glittered with red. And as the room started to spin, Sal managed to glance up.

“It’s... you!”

“Yes, and now everyone will think it was you.” Godric sneered, casually whipping off his athame. “You didn’t even see it coming... so much for Slytherin cunning and cleverness.”

His face hardened completely, and he snarled, sending a wandless hex at the other man. Nevertheless, he soon decided it wasn’t powerful enough, so he whipped out his wand and let loose a curse.

Sal’s vision began to tunnel in as agony shot through him. And he clamped his mouth shut to keep in his screams. He flicked his fingers to put up a shield, but the move failed as his magic sizzled and abruptly died. He then tried to move his hand toward his wand, but his arm refused to obey.

The amulet flared to life in his hand, and the curse ended as Godric was hit by the magical backlash. Sal sucked in a breath, the coppery taste of his blood tainting the air around him. Unsupported, he slid down the cold, stone wall. Although his entire left side felt like ice, his right was on fire from the outburst of the amulet. And in the background, he could hear the other man groan from the floor, his hastily erected shield not enough to protect him entirely.

‘Why?’

His mind screamed, “Why?”

And he only belatedly realized that he had asked out loud.

Godric picked himself up off the floor. “Why?” he repeated. “As if you don’t know, betrayer. You know. Admit it; you do!” He paused. “As to why they’ll think it was you... well, you are a parselmouth. That’s reason enough in their minds.” His perpetual sneer deepened. “Everyone knows that that is the mark of an evil wizard.”

“But... Dark isn’t evil... and they will know... that you... hurt me... that you...” Sal stuttered, his mind shutting down. The cold spread throughout his body, even conquering the fire from the amulet.

The blond snarled. “No, they won’t. I will simply spell the mess away and make it look like you ran off somewhere. The mark of a guilty heart.” He chuckled then, clearly liking that idea.

“But... Siobhan.” Sal could hardly speak.

The amulet burned hotter.

“Oh, her! Your filthy, little wife! I will make it look like she was the reason you left. Honestly, Salazar! How could you do that to me? Betray me like that?” Godric screamed back. “How could you stoop to such a level? How could you mix her dirty, muddy blood with yours? She’s nothing but a harlot! A filthy whore not fit to fill your bed! You shouldn’t have ever married her! She’s ruined everything!” His angry magic saturated the air, making it impossible to breathe.

“And... my... my son?” Salazar gasped.

He couldn’t get enough air. A faint music filled his ears. Warmth tried to rise up within him, but it was beaten back by the cold. By the endless and ever deepening cold. It felt like his very soul was being ripped away.

Godric came back to himself. “Oh, I won’t harm the child. After all, it is not his fault that he comes from filth.” He smirked, a manic cast to his face. “I will raise him as he is meant to be raised. Be the father to him that you’ll never be.”

The music faltered, and the warmth abruptly faded. Sal saw red everywhere. On his hands. On Godric’s. On the silvery athame.

Colors exploded before his eyes.

There was blue, the swirling color of the amulet. Red, the color of his blood and of Godric’s robes. Green, the color of his eyes. Silver and

gold, the colors of his wedding ring. Brown, the color of his wife's wonderful skin. Black, the color of his infant son's hair.

His last thoughts were of his family.

Siobhan, his beautiful wife. What was going to happen to her? Would she be harmed as well?

His son.

A single tear wound its way down Salazar's face. It dropped to the amulet clasped in his hand, only to sizzle away to nothingness.

He would never see his son again.

And several hundred miles and one thousand years away, Harry Potter awoke with a start.

AN: Salazar was killed in what now would be considered February, which is late winter. His son was approximately 8 to 9 months old at the time.

Special thanks to Hobbit-Tabby and DracoQueen for the beta.

Chapter One: Life is but a Dream

Ever Hopeful,

Azar

Updated and Edited:

05/31/08

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Chapter One: Life is but a Dream

Number Four, Privet Drive: July 1st, 1996

Startled, Harry practically flung himself up in his bed. His gaze flickered around as he drew in a few shaky breaths, trying his best to still his rapidly beating heart. But his breathing was more sharp pants than anything else, mouth dry as he tried to suck in more air. His hands were sweaty and trembling as he brushed hair out of his face. A shiver raced down his spine, spreading out through his limbs to his extremities.

After several agonizing moments, he finally calmed. His heart took on a normal rhythm, no longer doing its utmost to leave his chest. However, his skin was still clammy and cold, and Harry suddenly realized that he was freezing.

'What was that?' he thought as he drew up his raggedy blanket.

His fingers immediately traveled to his scar, but it was not burning. In fact, it did not hurt at all.

Was it a vision? A dream? Nightmare?

He froze, one hand hovering just in front of his face. Harry had just dreamt that Godric Gryffindor had murdered Salazar Slytherin. But that couldn't possibly be right. In the dream he'd been Salazar! And it had all been so real, hadn't felt like a dream at all! He had felt the blood running across his skin, could smell and taste the copper in the air. He'd felt the amulet burning as it tried to protect him.

Harry shook his head and ran his hands over his face tiredly. He was surprised to find that there were the remnants of tears on his skin. He trembled again, drawing the cover around him even tighter as he tried to warm his practically frozen body.

"What is going on?" he asked himself aloud, silently praying for an answer. But none was forthcoming.

He shivered then, still drenched in sweat. Yet, he ignored it as he slowly unclenched and examined his right hand. Harry half-expected burn marks, the faint outline of a bird with unfurled wings. However, his flesh was whole and unmarked, if not a bit red.

The Gryffindor sat quietly for a few minutes, thinking over what he had just experienced. Every detail was etched clearly in his mind, almost like he had actually been there. But that was silly. Harry had obviously been in his bed the entire time, and he certainly hadn't been around during the time of the Founders.

And his dream... vision... nightmare... whatever had been was certainly over. And he was now wide awake, alert if a bit sluggish.

Harry sighed. He had actually been having a quiet rather night. No dreams of Voldemort terrorizing innocents and not-so-innocents or Sirius falling through the Veil. He said a quiet apology to his godfather at that thought, a tiny spark of guilt welling inside. It was fierce for an instant but ebbed away as quickly as it had struck.

His talk with Luna at the end of the term had helped Harry in more ways than one. Dreamy, loony Luna was more than most people thought her to be. Within ten minutes, she had comforted Harry as no one else ever had or could. All she had done was listen and talk to him, but it was more than enough. She wasn't like the others, like Ron and Hermione. Harry knew that his two friends were trying to help him. But hearing "It's not your fault, Harry. How could you have known it was a trap?" at least twenty times a day only made him feel more and not less guilty. He didn't need to be constantly reminded of his own stupidity.

But even with that, his current summer was infinitely better than the last.

The discussion that the Order had with Vernon Dursley at the train station had had a profound effect on life at Privet Drive. Harry was no longer a slave in his own home. The Gryffindor was no longer forced to cook, clean, or do any number of other things. In fact, the Dursleys were now hesitant to breathe in his direction. It was almost as if they feared that by even looking at Harry, they would bring down the wrath of the Order.

That little talk had done Harry a world of good. And he tried to remind himself of that as he attempted to center his focus on something else. The only true complaints he had about his current situation were his nightmares and the occasional vision. If it wasn't memories of Sirius and Cedric, he saw Voldemort and his minions.

It figured that his first somewhat peaceful night of sleep in weeks would be interrupted. And of course, he would dream that he was blamed for the torture of Muggles and then murdered.

Harry exhaled very slowly, massaging his temples. At least, it hadn't been another vision, and perhaps it would be only this once. However, the teenager couldn't help but snort at the mere thought. Knowing his luck, he had a better chance of becoming the next Minister of Magic.

And as if summoned, echoes of his dream began to resound in his head. There were images, flashes of things he had seen. There was a sharp pain in Harry's heart when he thought of Salazar's wife.

A memory rose up in his mind. There was laughter, followed by a bronzed-skinned woman happily rubbing her very pregnant belly. Her eyes were filled with an indescribable joy, and tears of happiness clung to her dark eyelashes.

Harry exhaled heavily and groaned to himself, trying to dispel the image of the woman with a dreamy smile. She looked so very happy, as if it were the best moment of her entire life.

He forcefully shook his head. The image disappeared, and his room came back into focus. The teenager sat silently for a few moments, absentmindedly rubbing his right hand in the exact spot that had been burned in his dream. After some time had passed, he decided to get up, knowing that he wouldn't be able to return to sleep. Plus, there was no sense in simply sitting there until dawn.

Harry reached for his glasses, his hand first landing a recent letter from Remus before finding them. He took them from the bedside table and glanced at the alarm clock. Only to sigh yet again.

It was 4:30 in the morning. He'd only been asleep for a little over three hours.

Cautiously, Harry turned on the light, the sudden brightness causing him to blink rapidly a few times. He eyed Remus' letter, debating whether or not he should write his response. He had read it just before going to bed, deciding to reply in the morning, which it now was. Nonetheless, Harry didn't quite feel up to responding just yet.

The werewolf was not taking the loss of his last packmate very well, as evidenced by his letter, but he was at least trying to reach out to Harry in his grief. In turn, the sixth-year needed time to word his reply, to think it through. He didn't want to lose Remus, not when both of them had lost so much already. He couldn't risk alienating the final link to his parents, so Harry to be careful with what he wrote as there was just no telling how the man would react.

So instead letter-writing, the teenager decided on another course of action. Harry slipped out of bed, kneeling just beside to silently wiggle

free the loose floorboards underneath. He bent forward to retrieve a book, thinking about how much had changed just since hearing the prophecy and imagining what Ron would say if he knew.

Harry Potter, the non-studying, Quidditch playing, Boy-Who-Lived, was now a bookworm.

Harry's eyes twinkled in a very Dumbledore-esque fashion, and he actually chuckled. Hermione would just love this. She now had someone who would actually listen to all her study lectures. Though in all honesty, she'd probably insist that his study habits were more of an obsession than an attempt to receive good marks. But learning that one had a proverbial death sentence hanging over their head tended to be a very good motivator.

The teenager knew that he was as good as dead if he didn't do something about it. As he was now, there was no possible way for him to ever defeat Voldemort, and he was the only one capable of it. Harry was not about to die if he could help it; he had survived too much to simply give up now.

Yet, there was a fatal flaw in his scheme. Voldemort was one of the most powerful magic users of all time, far above the average wizard. He was capable of great feats of magic with a single wave of his wand, perhaps even just his hand. He was a fully fledged master in several subjects and knew more Dark Arts than all his followers combined. On the other hand, Harry was only a scrawny, soon-to-be sixth-year with slightly above average grades and a tendency to survive the impossible.

However, the Gryffindor had carefully considered this. And while Voldemort was most definitely superior in terms of raw power, Harry himself could not be too far behind; he had been marked as an equal, after all. To that, he had been able to conjure a corporeal Patronus at thirteen. One strong enough to drive off over a hundred Dementors on its own. Most of the Order members couldn't even do that. Hell, he wasn't certain some of his professors were capable of such a thing, and most of them held masteries in their chosen fields.

Nonetheless, power wasn't what truly set Tom Riddle and Harry Potter apart. Instead, it was knowledge. Magical knowledge. By Harry's reckoning, Voldemort had fifty years of magical learning on him. It would be to his benefit to try to bridge the gap. It was all but impossible for the teenager to catch up completely, but he also needed to learn as much as he could. Voldemort underestimated how much he actually knew, and the Gryffindor planned to use that to his advantage. Harry only needed one true opportunity to kill Tom, while the man constantly had to defend himself.

Still, it would not be good if Petunia, Vernon, or Dudley saw any of his books. Something Harry had realized and conceded very early on in his Hogwarts career. His relatives would certainly panic if they even glimpsed some of his chosen subjects. At best, they would blanch at the mere thought of him studying magic. At worst, they'd probably think that he was trying to poison them.

Fortunately, he had the perfect hiding place.

All in one motion, Harry deftly removed a single book and gently replaced the floorboards. He cautiously propped his single, flimsy pillow and climbed into bed. He leaned back very lightly, careful not to make his loose headboard rattle. It would not do for the Dursleys to walk by on the way to the bathroom, only to hear him making noise.

He scowled as he caught a sight of the title, Intermediate to Advanced Potions. He briefly wondered if the universe was out to get him, making him study Snape's subject on a night like this. It had to be a conspiracy, he realized. He had angered some vengeful deity in a past life, made the Maker regretful for even giving him life.

Harry rolled his eyes at that. And he silently opened the well-perused book to a marked page three-fourths of the way through.

The Consterno potion was originally used in conjunction with the Inordinatus spell during the Middle Ages. Combined, the spell and the potion have a rather unique effect on non-magic folk (more commonly referred to as Muggles). They create extreme confusion in those who have little or no magic. As such, they provided an excellent means of escape from Muggles and the occasional Squib.

During this time period, Muggles were known for their distinct fear of magic and for their desire to destroy all magic-users. Oftentimes, when wizards were visiting local villages or simply exploring, they would find themselves in a riotous situation. In such an event, the wizard would throw the Consterno potion at the mob (carefully as to not hit anyone), use the Inordinatus spell, and quickly escape.

These two in conjunction are also useful for...

A sudden movement just outside of the lamp's light caught Harry's eye. To his left, a shadow was stealthily creeping across the floor. Slowly and surely, the shadow moved closer. Harry listened, but there was no sound. Coming up with a plan on the fly, the Gryffindor pretended to still be engrossed in the text. He gently eased his hand toward his wand, which lay on his bedside table.

The shadow continued forward, oblivious to its discovery and Harry's movement. The teenager's fingers brushed the smooth wood of his wand. In one motion, Harry picked up his wand, left his bed, and turned toward the shadow ...

But nothing was there.

Neither a person nor a being. There was nothing.

The teenager quickly scanned his room searching for a trace of whatever it was, hunting around. He looked in every corner, searched under every piece of furniture. He even opened up the battered and beaten wardrobe that had once belonged to his cousin, glancing through the drawers.

But again, there was nothing.

Harry paced around in vain, looking for any spot he might have missed. After a time, he stopped in the middle of his room, studying the lengthening shadows warily. Harry quieted his breathing as much as he could and cocked his head to listen. All he heard were the distant snores of Dudley and Vernon, and his gaze roamed around once more.

After ten more minutes of futile searching, in which he even looked behind his desk and under his loose floorboards, the teenager sat on his bed. Harry's eyes went around again, still looking. He absentmindedly began to rub his right hand. The fact that he hadn't found anything did not comfort him in the least. In fact, it only made him edgier. Something was not right here.

"I must be going crazy," Harry said to himself. "I have to be! Weird dreams and then seeing things! I know... or at least, I think I saw a shadow move on the floor." In his distress, Harry did not even notice that he was whispering in Parseltongue. "I don't know. Perhaps I just imagined it." He shook his head and looked at the quickly-setting yet still bright and almost full moon. "It was probably just the light from the moon casting a weird shadow."

Harry unexpectedly smirked. He was becoming as paranoid as Mad-Eye Moody. Next thing, he'd be going around hexing random passersby for looking at him strangely. However, a tiny little voice in the back of his mind insisted that he wasn't becoming paranoid. It insisted that he had actually seen something move, that there had been someone else... something else in his room.

Exhaling dejectedly, Harry glanced at his clock and blanched. His face immediately drained of color, while his eyes bugged out.

It was now 5:40!

There was no way he'd spent that much time reading. Ten, twenty minutes tops. But over an hour? He hadn't even read a full page. Further, he highly doubted that he'd accidentally fallen asleep, especially after the dream before.

Something was most definitely wrong. A feeling of dread settled over him. There was a sinking sensation in his stomach. He grimaced, face tight with worry.

What was going on? Was it just his imagination? Were all those years of Voldemort-induced paranoia getting to him?

Harry continued to rub his hand, not even realizing that he was doing it.

Whatever was going on was connected with that dream. He just knew it! It had all started after his strange dream.

Harry glanced at the clock again. The Dursleys would rise soon. Vernon to get ready for work, Petunia to make breakfast, and Dudley... well, he would probably not be up until noon. As if Big D would even make an attempt to wake this early, probably still hung-over from the night before, and Harry rolled his eyes, imagining his cousin awake or even lucid at the crack of dawn.

But even this comical thought could not dispel the uneasy feeling. His face did not lose its worried cast. There was a lurking suspicion in his mind; he knew that he had not imagined it.

There had been someone... or something in his room.

Unknown, The Dark Lord's Personal Library: July 4th, 1996

Tom Riddle leaned back in his chair and slowly rubbed at his temples. His head ached painfully. And in a distinct mockery of all his power and magic, he could do nothing to get rid of it. Even several draughts later, he was still in agony. It had been like this for days now, and his servants were even more skittish and fearful around him than usual, terrified that he would snap at any moment. His patience was held together by a thin string, one that was fraying even more as his temples throbbed in time to his heartbeat.

He curled one hand into a fist, using the other to close the book sitting on his desk in front of him. As he was at the moment, it was of little use to him, though that did nothing to diminish its true worth. Priceless, the gem of his collection. The book itself was dark blue, almost black, with shifting runes all along the cover. And even in his current state, he very carefully returned it to the drawer, setting it down with an uncharacteristic gentleness. Tom absentmindedly layered protections over his desk as he stood, but his brain suddenly gave another agonizing stab when he moved too quickly. He growled

to himself and shoved his chair roughly back into place, still careful not hit his desk.

Voldemort was not pleased, not pleased at all. In fact, he was so far from happy that the next being he saw would undoubtedly share in his agony via liberal use of the Cruciatus curse.

Unless it was Bellatrix, of course. She always did seem to avoid punishment.

A sharp pain lanced through his brain, and Voldemort jerked back. He winced as his neck cracked loudly, now throbbing just as badly as his head. He made a noise in his throat, a sound that was in no way, shape, or form like a groan. Not at all.

Voldemort had the very sudden urge to collapse back in his chair and bash his head on his desk. It honest couldn't make the throb any worse, might actually alleviate his utter agony. Or perhaps simply knock him unconscious. The only thing that stopped him was how unseemly such behavior was for a man of his caliber.

And the cause of his torment, of this unending torture. A dream. A nightmare really.

Even the mere thought of it was enough to set him further on edge, teeth grinding together. He was the Dark Lord; he wasn't supposed to get nightmares! People like that sniveling weakling Pettigrew had nightmares. Dumbledore had nightmares. Potter had nightmares. Lord Voldemort, master of the Dark and greatest mage in the world, did not!

He wasn't weak. He wasn't afraid of anything. Not even the undead. They were just a tool, a means to an end. They were not supposed to leave him shaking and in a cold sweat. They were not supposed to make him glance nervously over his shoulder whenever he heard a strange noise. They were not supposed to frighten him. They hadn't before, and Voldemort couldn't fathom why they did now.

But perhaps Potter found them just as unnerving as he currently did. Hm... he would have to consider that.

However, that was beside the point. So many peculiar things had happened as of late, and this was only one in a long string of oddities. Bizarre feelings, sensations, flashes, visions of places and people he did not know, surges against his Occlumency shields.

Something odd was going on. Something very odd indeed. And by Salazar Slytherin, he intended to find out what.

Consterno: Alarm, Frighten. Potion. Causes the victim to become exceptionally frightened and to flee.

Inordinatus: Disorderly, In Confusion. Verbal and non-verbal. Causes bewilderment and confusion.

AN: I used an online translator, so if the words aren't correct please forgive me.

To everyone who reviewed: Thanks!

Special thanks to Hobbit-Tabby and DracoQueen for the beta and to Our Catholic Faith (online) for the Latin translation.

Chapter Two: A Glimpse into the Past

Ever Hopeful,

Azar

Updated and Edited:

05/31/08

Chapter Two: A Glimpse into the Past

Time is my ally. I fear not death.
She is my guardian, my protector.
She whispers to me in the dark. I hear her in the wind. I taste her in the rain.
She is my guide. I feel her in the air, in the water, in the earth.
She leads me, shows me the way, and never leaves my side.
She is my dearest friend, my most trusted confidant.
She sends shivers along my bones and brings comfort and peace.
Time is my ally. I do not fear death.

A glittering, blue amulet lay nestled amongst dead leaves. The stone at its center ebbed and flowed like water, and it shimmered through all the imaginable shades of blue with the occasionally hints of green and purple. A metallic design encased the stone, a shimmering bird with unfurled wings.

A gentle breeze stirred the leaves, uncovering the artifact.

“What is this?” asked a soft voice as a man bent down. “Hm... some kind of amulet? I wonder what it is doing here.” Emerald eyes studied it intently, even as he fingered a holly wand in his right hand.

“Maybe it is some kind of trap? I should most definitely check it out.”

He paused for a moment before casting spells with a flick of his fingers. However, the results only seemed to puzzle the man, and he raised his wand.

“Best use my wand just to be sure. I might need the extra power boost.” The mage pointed his wand at the talisman. His lips didn’t move as he silently cast several incantations, searching for any hint of evil or ill intent.

The blue stone showed no reaction. It merely continued to swirl.

“No trace of malice nor of danger. It must be benevolent or at least neutral,” the man commented. He continued to examine the object,

taking in every detail and lightly ghosting his fingers just over the surface. "But why is it here?"

The breeze tugged strands of black hair into his face, forcing him to brush them back behind his ear. Leaves on the surrounding trees swayed and whispered in the wind, and the sky burned the pink of an approaching sunset. Yet, he still continued to observe the object in question, not noticing any of the rest. A pale hand reached down to touch, and two fingertips connected.

The amulet began to glow.

Pure light surrounded the man as beautiful music filled the air. Comforting warmth spread from his fingers throughout his body. The sweet feeling of magic permeated the area and entered inside him, filling his very being. The music gained in intensity, and the man sank to the ground, legs no longer supporting his weight. However, his fingers were still connected. The melody reached a crescendo and faded, taking the light, the warmth, and the magic with it.

The man let out the breath that he had not been aware he was holding. Surprised eyes opened, and he began to chuckle, his warm laughter filling the air. The wind picked back up and swirled around him in a dance. The artifact glowed once again but not nearly as bright.

After a few moments, he silenced. The man removed his hand from and shakily climbed to his feet. He dusted off his dark robes and brushed back his hair. He glanced back to the amulet and watched as it glittered innocently on the forest floor. The metallic bird on it yawned and flapped its wings, as though in the process of waking up.

Hesitantly, the man bent and tentatively touched the artifact

Nothing happened.

He picked it up and placed it in an inner pocket of his robes. The confused man turned, looking up at the darkening sky for a minute before walking out of the forest and toward a distant castle.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Faculty Lounge: Early Autumn, 962 A.D.

Two women were staring over a chessboard, occasionally stealing glances at each other. One inattentively ran her fingers through her honey-colored hair before moving her knight. The second frowned, eyes narrowing and forehead creasing. In response, she moved her bishop, taking the other's knight with a smirk of triumph.

Nearby, a third woman sat by the fireplace and cooed to the small infant in her arms. She softly kissed the infant's upraised hand, her hair falling about her face as she lowered her head. The baby giggled, and the blonde looked up momentarily from her game. Nonetheless, she soon grinned and returned her attention to the board, only to belatedly notice that her companion had already made another move and was even then smugly grinning at her.

She shook her head, contemplating her next move. Her bare feet absentmindedly toyed with the worn but still colorful rug underneath her chair. As she thought, her eyes unfocused and drifted nearby, over to the numerous and completely filled bookshelves. Her gaze roamed over to the countless candles, most of which were already lit despite the fact that there was still some daylight streaming in through the windows.

The blonde spotted the lone man of their quartet sitting in a darkened corner. He was scowling at the page of his book, apparently unhappy with what was there. And he stomped his foot, nearly stepping on one of the other spell books that littered the floor around him. He glanced up unexpectedly, and she gifted him with a warm smile before turning away, missing the dark glare he gave in return.

Finally, just as her opponent was beginning to become cross with the delay, she moved her pearl rook in an unexpected position. "Check," she called, beaming wickedly at her friend, who was surprisingly smiling back. "Why so happy, Rowena? I dare say that you are losing." She tilted her head and carefully studied the woman across from her, even as her rook was captured.

A pair of blue eyes looked up. "No reason in particular." Rowena shook her head with dismay and pulled at her curls when her friend took her ebony knight. "I'm just happy today." She smiled slyly as she moved her pawn to the end of the board and it turned into another queen.

"Humph, no reason! You are glowing with happiness!" intoned the third woman, joining in the conversation. Her face practically sparked with mischief. "You're up to something, Ravenclaw. I just know it." She gently rocked the infant in one arm, while managing to shake her finger with the other.

"Honestly, Helga," Rowena answered, "I'm just happy. Am I not allowed to have a good day?" She shifted in her chair, twirling a fiery curl around her finger as her other hand tapped the chessboard.

"Joy is coming off you in waves," added the first woman. Her crystalline eyes continued to gaze at Rowena, candlelight dancing across her skin. "A pleasant class perhaps. A sudden discovery. Or perhaps some naughty time with Quinn."

Rowena blushed, making her peach complexion look ablaze. Embarrassed more by her reaction than her friend's suggestion. Honestly, she should be used to it by now.

"Siobhan..." She paused and looked away. "There's something I need to tell you."

"Yes?" Siobhan leaned forward a little. Her gaze bored into Rowena, eyes reflecting the candlelight and seeming to glance into her friend's very soul. They looked eerie in that moment, so light a blue as to be almost white.

"Well, I..." Rowena hesitated. Her eyes flickered from Siobhan to Helga and back.

The blonde reached across the chessboard and gently took Rowena's right hand in her left. "You can tell us, my friend." She lightly squeezed, feeling a tremble and rubbing circles on her skin.

"You can tell us anything. Is it a problem with Quinn? With your sister?"

"No, to both." Rowena's lips twitched, and it was very obvious that she was excited. "I know I can tell you anything. It's just difficult to say. I--"

An odd look abruptly crossed Siobhan's face. Her fingers went limp, and Rowena's hand slipped out. She glanced to the open windows on the far wall, noting that the sky was the faint pink of an imminent sunset. She could see the swaying trees of the forest in the distance, the leaves just beginning to change to their autumn colors.

"Salazar?" She whispered more to herself than to her companions.

The other three glanced at Siobhan. Worry etched Helga's face, even though she continued to rock the infant, and she all but stared at the younger woman. Rowena rose and stepped over. She lightly placed her hand on the blonde's shoulder, shaking her gently. Godric merely sneered and returned to his reading, his pyrite eyes glittering dangerously.

"What is it? What's happened?" Rowena asked in a fierce whisper. Her face was filled with concern. "Are you all right? Has something happened to Sal?"

"I don't know. Something has happened to him, but it's not bad. I feel light... and warmth." A dreamy expression crossed her face. "It is so wonderful!" Siobhan continued to stare at the now shadowed forest, seeing the sky turn a deep red.

Rowena glanced questioningly at the oldest woman but was met with the same confused expression. She raised an eyebrow, but the brunette merely shook her head and shrugged carefully, trying not to jostle the now dozing baby.

Suddenly, Siobhan inhaled, causing the other two to jump at the unexpected sound. "It's gone now," the youngest stated sadly, voice heavy. "But I can sense that he is fine." She paused for a moment, smile tugging at her lips. "He is returning to the castle."

Both Rowena and Helga breathed heavy sighs of relief. Godric simply continued to read, not bothering to look up from his book and completely ignoring the others.

The infant stirred. He opened his blue eyes, which were so much like his mother's. He gazed drowsily at the person holding him and squirmed.

"Ah," Helga murmured. She turned to grin cheekily at Siobhan. "I believe that this youngling wants his mother."

Siobhan walked over, bare feet avoiding the cold stone and remaining on the various rugs. She gently took her son into her arms with a wink at the older woman. She bent her face forward and lovingly kissed him on the nose. In response, he cooed sleepily at her, little face alit with pleasure.

Rowena watched with a rapt expression, eyes all but glowing as she watched. Helga caught the hungry glance, giving an appraising raise of her eyebrow in return.

Siobhan didn't notice, too involved with her son. "My sweet little Tristan--"

"Sweet? That he is, my dear. And such a gentleman!" Helga grinned and winked at Rowena. "Of course, he is scarcely more than two months old so he couldn't be too much trouble." She sighed dramatically, taking on the aspects of someone remembering the past. "I remember when my youngest was that age--"

"It was only five years ago," Ravenclaw intoned drolly. "You make it sound like it was a century. And so wistful about it. Surely, you can't want more. You've driven your husband mad with the ones you already have."

Siobhan nodded in agreement before pausing and looking around suspiciously. "Where is Edmund today? Better yet, where are your children?" the blonde asked curiously, glancing back to her own son. "I would have thought their lessons over by now."

"The lot of them are visiting your mother in Hogsmeade," Hufflepuff answered absentmindedly, attention still focused on the past.

Siobhan studied Helga, even as her lips briefly quirked at the thought of Amia, Edmund's mother and her foster parent. Nevertheless, the smile quickly slid off of her face.

"At the village? Even with all the attacks lately?" she questioned nervously. "I know that so far it only Muggles have been attacked, but still, they might choose to retaliate." She worriedly nibbled her lip.

In the corner, Godric Gryffindor stiffened, color draining from his face. The man continued to look at the book in his hands, but his eyes were not moving. He began to sweat, barely resisting the urge to wipe at his forehead.

"I know," Helga answered calmly, "but wards protect the village. No Muggle can see it, let alone attack it." However, she didn't sound entirely convinced.

"But what about when they are going, or when they are coming back?" Siobhan's eyebrows knitted together in concern. "The wards don't extend that far, so part of the journey they'd be exposed." She continued to watch Helga.

"Edmund and I talked about it." The oldest woman blinked slowly. "That is why he took Quinn with them."

Hearing this, Siobhan eased somewhat and turned to her other friend.

Rowena nodded in agreement. "With two fully-trained wizards, the children should be safe enough."

"Besides they kept begging to see Granddame." Helga quipped good-naturedly, "They absolutely adore her. I suspect that they might love her more than me!" She laughed, but it sounded almost forced.

Siobhan shook her head but decided to play along. "I highly doubt that," she replied, glancing back at Tristan before lowered her head and gently rubbed his silky skin with her nose.

"As do I." Rowena tapped her fingers on the chessboard. "Anyone can see that they absolutely adore you. Or more specifically, your cooking."

Away from them, Godric momentarily relaxed. He rolled his eyes at the exchange but said nothing. Feeling safer now, he returned to his reading.

"You're an excellent mother," Ravenclaw carried on without missing a single beat.

Helga flushed. "I'm not the only one." Her brown eyes flicked pointedly at Siobhan, who began to softly sing to her son. She looked back at Rowena. "And I suspect that you will be a great one as well." She grinned, crinkling her nose. "But first, you have to actually have children."

Rowena smirked wickedly, looking to all the world like she was privy to something incredibly important that no one else knew. In that moment, she very much resembled the cat who had eaten the canary.

"That might be sooner than you think." The redhead bit her lip, fighting the urge to laugh.

Both Siobhan and Helga abruptly froze, a suspicion in their minds. Tristan made an angry noise and glared at his mother. He lifted his tiny fist and tapped Siobhan in an attempt to make her continue singing. The blonde recovered after a moment but did not continue. Instead, she turned her gaze to Rowena.

"I have suspected for a while. I confirmed it this morning with a spell." Rowena beamed, face open and delighted. She twirled around, causing her skirt to float in the air. "Quinn was ecstatic when I told him; he just cannot believe that he is going to be a father."

Siobhan giggled. "This is so wonderful!" she added truthfully, excitement at her friend's good fortune building.

Rowena and her husband had been trying to have a baby for several years. It was good that they were finally able. Siobhan had long feared that one of them might be barren.

Helga finally recovered, and she hastily jumped to her feet and hurried to her friend. She threw her arms around Rowena and tightly hugged the younger woman.

"I am so very happy for you," Helga whispered in her ear. She pulled back and looked directly into Rowena's eyes. "I know that you have wanted this for quite some time." She fought the urge to cry.

Siobhan continued to beam. "This truly is wonderful. I..." She paused. Her attention flicked to the door. Her smile grew even wider, if that were even possible.

A few seconds later, the door burst open. A slender, dark-haired man hurried in, his robes billowing behind him.

"Siobhan! Rowena! Helga! Godric!" Four sets of eyes instantly looked towards the man. "You'll never believe what I have found!" the man put in excitedly, almost forgetting to breathe.

"Calm down, Salazar!" Gryffindor ordered from his corner. He abruptly rose from his seat and marched over to the other man.

Sal held out his hand. "But look!"

A small, blue amulet glittered on his palm. The metallic design around its edges glinted and shimmered from silver to gold, and the watery stone flowed through various shades of blue.

The other four adults stared at it in awed silence. Even the infant, still held firmly in his mother's arms, appeared amazed.

"What is it, Sal?" his wife murmured after a few heartbeats, she was bursting with almost uncontrollable excitement.

"I don't know," he replied softly. With his free hand he brushed a loose lock out of his face. "I found it in the woods. When I first touched it... I don't know. Light. Music. Warmth," Sal added with awe.

His wife tore her gaze away to look up at her husband. "So this is what I felt--"

"You felt it?" he interrupted with amazement.

"Yes," she murmured back, "such light..."

By this time, the other three adults were recovering from their shock. They shook their heads but continued to stare at the artifact. Tristan, who was still enthralled by the stone, lay quietly in his mother's arms. A covetous look suddenly appeared on Godric's face. He swiftly reached over and snatched the amulet out of Sal's hand. A blinding light filled the room, followed by a wave of heat and a muffled scream.

An instant later, the light cleared. Godric lay stiffly on the floor, four feet from where he had been previously. His red robe was pooled around him, the firelight causing it to look a little too much like fresh blood. He clutched at his burned hand and moaned in pain.

Roughly a foot away laid the talisman. It gleamed innocently.

Helga gasped, "What... What was that?" She gaped at the artifact, face very tight as she gaped in shock.

Sal made a neutral sound, and he deftly sidestepped the three women and knelt next to Godric. He took his friend's hand and examined it, running his fingers along the edges. The palm of his hand was charred and red, and the design of the amulet was branded onto his flesh. Godric noticeably winced as Sal ghosted over it but didn't make another sound.

After a moment, Sal laid his palm over the burn and quietly mouthed a spell. Slytherin's hand glowed and design slowly disappeared, the char and the redness following. Godric sighed in relief and clambered awkwardly to his feet. He glanced at the amulet, face spasming

dangerously. Godric pulled out his wand and viciously pointed it at the object, a curse upon his lips.

Sal, noticing what his friend was about to do, rose from his kneeling position. He placed his pale hand firmly on Godric's shoulder.

“No! At least, not yet.”

Godric glared at the other man but relaxed. He slowly lowered his yew wand.

Meanwhile, Siobhan handed her son to Hufflepuff. She took cautious steps toward the artifact. The others looked at her with alarm, but she disregarded them.

“Siobhan,” Helga said urgently. Her face filled with apprehension.

The blonde ignored her. She slowly knelt and tapped the amulet with her index finger.

It shimmered brighter but did not harm her.

She picked it up gently and stood. “Well, that was... odd,” she commented. Her gaze sought out Godric, and she looked at him with concern.

“Maybe it just doesn’t like him,” Helga quipped lightly, trying to lighten the mood. She turned and winked at Godric before silently returning her attention to the amulet.

He practically growled in return, not amused at all. He looked at them with thinly concealed disgust. No one noticed, however, for they were all too busy examining the artifact.

Rowena slowly approached Siobhan, hesitantly stepping forward. She tentatively reached out and touched the artifact.

Again, it glowed brighter but did no harm.

The redhead gently took it from Siobhan's hand, and she ran her delicate fingers over the metallic design. She softly flicked the swirling stone. It felt odd, not at all like a stone. It was liquidy but was not moist. Puzzled, she turned the talisman over. On the back of the mysterious stone was some form of writing.

"Look at this," Rowena stated softly, running her fingers over the script. "It looks like some sort of inscription."

"Hm... yes, it does," commented Siobhan, studying the writing with a great deal of interest. "But it is not in any language that I am familiar with."

Sal left his place at Gryffindor's side and joined the two. "I didn't notice this before," he said slowly and studied the script as well. "I have not seen these runes before either, though they do resemble ancient Parsel writings."

"Really?" Rowena asked and bent forward. "I guess it does look a bit like Parsel." She straightened up and glanced at the others. "If Salazar doesn't know what it says, then there is very little hope for the rest of us. He is, after all, the best with runes."

Slytherin took the compliment in stride. "I suppose." He shook his head. "This is very peculiar," he put in absentmindedly.

"Peculiar?" questioned Helga. "The whole thing is odd. This is just a day of weird things." Hufflepuff glanced from Salazar to Rowena and back. She added, "And of surprises." Her face took on an unusual and somewhat dangerous look. She snickered; an important thought had just occurred to her.

"Guess what," Helga commanded Salazar, and she moved from one foot to the other, practically dancing with mischief. She didn't even wait for him to reply. "Rowena is with child."

Sal's gaze left the amulet. He turned to glance at Rowena, looking pleased but not surprised by the announcement

Rowena froze. "You have such impeccable timing, Hufflepuff," she stated sarcastically, face twitching somewhat. She glared at Helga and crossed her arms over her chest.

"It is as good a time as any, my friend," Helga defended sweetly. She smiled without a trace of guilt.

"Humph. I--" Rowena started to say.

"Well," Sal inserted, "I think that her timing is wonderful." His lips quirked. "Congratulations, sister of my heart." His smile turned into a full-blown grin. "And may there be many more children after this one."

Rowena blushed and looked away. She shrugged, hair sliding in front of her face to hide her embarrassment. Ravenclaw glanced back to the object that lay in her hand, avoiding Sal's amused eyes.

Gryffindor stood haughtily to the side, ignoring the conversation around him. He simply stared with disgust at the artifact and defensively pulled even further away.

Siobhan looked at her husband suspiciously. "You already knew. How did you already know?"

Sal smirked at her. "I suspected." He winked cheekily at his wife. "Call it Slytherin intuition."

"Slytherin intuition!" Helga commented dryly, "He can sense any subterfuge or secret a mile away."

Sal merely continued to smile. His gaze flickered back to Rowena, who was staring intently at the metallic design on the artifact. He watched as her mouth dropped open and her eyebrows rose in surprise.

"What is it, Row?" Salazar asked curiously, noticing her reaction to the item.

"This design." She indicated the metal pattern etched on the amulet.

“Well, what about it?” Helga questioned, nibbling on her lip.

Rowena inclined her head. “Well, it almost looks like a phoenix.”

Converso Graviditas: Dealing with Pregnancy. Verbal and non-verbal. Confirms pregnancy.

AN: Oh, on a side note, there is a back-story to Siobhan, Salazar, and the rest of the Founders. It is kind of weird, but part of it will be included in this story as dreams, flashbacks, etc. and part of it will be in the sequel. Yes, there is a sequel. It partially includes the three years that Hogwarts was built. As of now, there isn't any of it written, but there is an outline. Plus, it is connected with the mysterious, blue amulet (BIG HINT).

Also, this story and its sequel now officially include Hermione/Bill Weasley. Yes, I know that there is quite an age difference, but when there is love age doesn't matter. I know this for a fact; all I have to do is look at my grandparents. They are EIGHTEEN years apart, which is far more than the difference between Hermione and Bill! So there you have it; this story will have Hermione/Bill.

To everyone who reviewed: Thanks!

Special thanks to Hobbit-Tabby and DracoQueen for the beta and to Our Catholic Faith (online) for the Latin translation.

Chapter Three: A Thing Called Trust

Ever Hopeful,

Azar

Updated and Edited:

05/31/08

Chapter Three: A Thing Called Trust

Number Four, Privet Drive: July 9th, 1996

Emerald eyes opened and blinked several times, and a sigh shuddered through a still-too-thin body. A teenager sat up quickly in an old, creaky bed, and his fingers rubbed his eyes before moving to his temples. A somewhat shaky hand reached toward a bedside table and brought a pair of silver-framed glasses to his exceptionally tired face. He sighed again, a slight smile touching his lips.

Harry Potter had just dreamed about Salazar again.

Only this time, it had been rather good. Especially the part where Godric had been knocked on his ass. He laughed at that, smiling with satisfaction at just the thought. He couldn't help but be biased. His was a Gryffindor, and his founder shouldn't be such a bastard.

Harry sighed again, mind turning to Siobhan. A slight blush tainted his cheeks. Siobhan Slytherin was certainly no Cho Chang. Not the least be weepy or hung up on her snobby and treacherous friends.

Harry shook his head and ran a hand through his still stubbornly untidy hair. He knew he shouldn't think things like that. Siobhan was just in his dreams, completely imaginary. He didn't even know if Salazar had ever been married, much less if that was really his wife's name.

He shook his head again vigorously, blush deepening as he cheeks went from pink to red, adding a hint of color to his pale face. He couldn't believe that he fancied a fantasy woman, one who existed only in his head. He could only imagine what Ron and Hermione would say.

Harry threw himself back and landed on his flimsy pillow. He groaned heavily and fought the urge to bang his head on something hard.

Ron would probably laugh and think him completely insane. And Hermione... well, she'd just shake her head and come up with some logical explanation for it all. Like it was his way of compensating for

having bad experiences in relationships or some other plausible explanation.

He shrugged his shoulders, tapping his fingers on his chin. He brushed a loose piece of hair out of his face and tried to pat it down into place.

Perhaps she would be right. That didn't mean he wanted to stop the dreams. He'd had them every night for over a week, and it simply wasn't enough. He wanted to know what happened to them. What had happened to them.

Each time, his dreams were different but always about Salazar. True, they had all been from his perspective, but they included the other founders... and Siobhan.

Strangely enough, bar the very first, they had all been pleasant. Sure, some of them had only been about common everyday experiences, such as teaching the students at Hogwarts. Yet, to Harry, each had been an adventure into the life of someone else. Someone who didn't have to battle his own fame, someone relatively normal. As time passed, it felt less like they were dreams and more like glimpses, memories of the lives of the founders.

And stranger still, the people seemed vaguely familiar. Harry felt as though he actually knew them, like they had all met before. They were almost like long forgotten companions from a time before he attended Hogwarts, from before his parents died, from before he was even born.

But that was impossible. Completely and utterly mad. Wasn't it?

It was one thing to have visions of Voldemort and his minions. They shared a connection, after all. But people he had never even met before? He wasn't a bloody Seer! He was no Trelawney.

Harry shivered at the thought. It was all a bit unnerving. Maybe he really was crazy.

Still, his dream... memories were not the only odd occurrence. In fact, there had been many bizarre things happening lately. Even strange for a wizard like him.

The first had occurred the day following his initial dream. Harry had started reading a new Defense book, only to become so engrossed in it that he read it all the way through. Yet, much to his surprise, less than an hour had passed, from start to finish. And the book was over a thousand pages long!

Other strange incidents soon followed, much to the dismay of the Dursleys, not that they really realized what was going on. It was like time seemed to speed up or slow down of its own accord. One minute, Harry was weeding Petunia's flowerbeds. The next, it was still morning, and all his chores were complete. Despite the fact that it should have taken all day.

Truth be told, it almost seemed as though time had a mind of its own, but there were additional peculiar happenings as well. Though he hadn't seen the moving shadow again, Harry still felt as though he was continuously monitored. It always seemed like there were eyes watching him, taking note of everything he did. The Gryffindor couldn't even get a glass of water or use the toilet without feeling like he was being observed. Sure, he could write it off as anxiety from being constantly watched by members of the Order, but the teenager wasn't quite certain that they were the cause.

Harry suddenly rolled his eyes at the thought of the Order. They tried so hard to be invisible, but how could he possibly miss they were there? It was pretty hard to miss the sounds of their Apparations. Plus, with Tonks practically tripping on the cracks in the sidewalks, he would have to be an idiot not to notice.

He smirked then, but it was more out of resignation than of malice. The thought of the playful, friendly, but very clumsy Auror always brought a smile to his face. Tonks was rather amusing on her own, but coupled with her inability to remain standing for more than five minutes, she was a laugh-riot. The fact that she had actually gone out of her way to write and even speak to him when she wasn't supposed to over the passed few weeks further endeared her to him.

However, Harry's thoughts soon drifted back to his other watchers, making him shiver. They were still outside, but it felt as though someone was inside the house with him. It was possible, however, that the Order knew something about it. And that only made him wonder what else they were up to, especially since the Weasleys and Hermione were no doubt...

Harry suddenly started.

Hermione. He had totally forgotten!

Harry silently threw back his thin blankets and slipped out of bed. He quickly moved to his desk and turned on a wobbly lamp. His excited fingers picked up a small envelope and opened it in with a single movement. Inside, there were several thin sheets of paper, all of which seemed to be covered by incredibly neat but still tiny writing.

Harry mentally berated himself for forgetting her letter. He had no idea why he had even done so. Especially after Tonks had gone out of her way to deliver it, owl post somewhat sketchy as of late and too easy to intercept. At least, that's what Tonks had said.

He growled at himself as he unfolded the paper and started to read.

Dear Harry,

I hope you are well and that you are not being too hard on yourself. As I told you before, Snuffles' death is not your fault, Harry! There is no way you could have known that it was a trap. You only wanted to protect him, and in turn, he only wanted to protect you. He loved you! He wouldn't want you to blame yourself...

Harry frowned heavily, eyes drifting away from the parchment. His shoulders drooped as he listlessly gazed at a spot on the far wall. Hermione's words were very true. Deep down, Harry still felt traces of guilt. However, at the same time, he knew that it was not his fault. There was no way he could have known; he had only wanted to save Sirius.

The Gryffindor forcefully steeled his shoulders, turning his gaze back. His gaze rapidly skimmed Hermione's letter, stopping at a more cheerful part.

...As you may have already guessed, I am currently at the headquarters with all of the Weasleys, even Bill and Charlie. Percy isn't here though. I believe that he is still living in London somewhere. Bill told me that Percy spoke to Mr. Weasley at the Ministry and that Percy wanted Mr. Weasley to apologize! Can you believe that, Harry? I don't know how Mr. Weasley responded – Bill wouldn't tell me. He did, however, start laughing every time that I asked, so it must have been rather interesting.

A lot of things have been happening here lately. Fred and George have joined the Order. They were inducted the day after we returned from school. They had some sort of ceremony, but only Order members were allowed, so I am unsure of the details. Over fifty people came, but then there was have a meeting directly after the ceremony. I suspect that is why there were so many.

Plus, something important is going on. I'm not sure what, however. Though, it must be big. The Order is having constant meetings. Members keep randomly popping in and then just disappearing. It must be REALLY big. No one will tell us – Ron, Ginny, and I – anything. Mrs. Weasley still thinks we are far too young to know, though I am beginning to wonder if she might actually be right. At least for some of us. I continue to ask Bill, but he said that he was sworn to secrecy. Even Fred and George won't tell, no matter how much Ron badgers them. We can't even use their Extendable Ears anymore because they refuse to lend us any! I just wish I knew what was going on.

Even more, I wish you were here. It is just not the same without you. Sure, Ron is here, but he is not very good company. He has been even more... difficult lately. I know that I haven't been spending much time with him, but I have been talking with Bill a great deal recently. He has just so many interesting things to say! I know that curse-breaking was exciting work. After all, they do have to avoid being cursed themselves. But I never imagined it would be this fascinating! Honestly, the level of detail and thought that went into the curses. Did

you know that the ancient wizards made a specialized curse that was only used for Nefertiti's tomb? Apparently, it was designed to not only incinerate anyone who tried to enter, it also would cause painful burns to appear on that person's family, and Bill said that this wasn't even the most interesting one!

Bill has also been helping me research your scar. After all, he does know a great deal about curses. We really don't have anything conclusive yet, but we have discovered some interesting things, like about your mother's sacrifice. Everyone knows that when Voldemort cast the spell on you that it reflected back, that your mother's love saved you...but what we didn't know was that when she died it was like a countercurse to Avada Kedavra. This was why it reflected the spell back. I am sure you know what this means Harry. Avada Kedavra is supposed to be immune to deflection and, more importantly, reflection! If we can somehow make a spell that mimics the effect of your mother's love we might have a counter to the curse!

Harry froze. Hermione's letter slipped from his unmoving fingers onto the worn floorboards.

A counter to Avada Kedavra? People had been trying for centuries. Even Nicholas Flamel had failed. It was a fool's hope for certain, but the mere chance that it could work was priceless. They could save dozens, hundreds of people. There would be no more victims like his parents and countless others.

A sharp shake of his head ended Harry's train of thought. He quickly blinked and coughed to clear his throat. After a moment, the teenager bent and retrieved Hermione's letter.

It might not be possible, though. Still, we can only hope! Bill and I will continue to work on it. I know that the odds are stacked against us, but we have to try.

I pray that you are well. And please take care of yourself, Harry. For my sake, if not your own.

Love Always,
Hermione

Harry smiled faintly. He'd try, if only to make her feel better. His grin faltered for a moment but then returned full force. His green eyes sparkled once again, resembling the headmaster's for a moment. Even though most of the letter wasn't very informative, it was good to know that Hermione had thought to write. Ron apparently hadn't.

A heavy sigh escaped Harry. He wrapped his arms across his chest and shivered but not due to the coolness of his room. He had a dark sense of foreboding, and the teenager could not help but feel that something was wrong. Something that centered around Ron.

"It is more than Ron being difficult, as Hermione put it," Harry murmured to himself. He clenched and unclenched his right hand subconsciously. Unaware, he began to gently rub his palm.

In truth, he could understand why Ron was acting that way. Anyone with half a brain could tell that Ron fancied Hermione. It was painfully obvious! And everyone knew how he was when Hermione even thought about speaking to another male.

Harry rolled his eyes at the thought as visions of an infuriated Ron raging about Viktor Krum filled his head. A slight smirk played at his lips.

Ron was known for his irrational jealousy, and it sounded like Hermione had been spending a great deal of time with Bill. This in itself would have caused problems, but it also seemed that Hermione might like Bill as more than a friend.

If Ron wasn't acting likely a git because he was insanely jealous then Harry was a flobberworm. But there was a darker edge to everything, a feeling that there was something else entirely going on. Perhaps Ron was still bothered about what had happened at the Ministry. And either way, this situation had catastrophe written all over it.

Absentmindedly, he lifted his fingers to his temples and began to rub small circles. He could already feel a headache coming on.

But Harry suddenly froze. Something was odd, wrong. There was someone else in the room... again.

A mysterious presence filled the entire area, and it silently approached the desk where Harry stood. The presence moved hesitantly behind and to the left of him, to avoid the lamp's light. It continued to edge nearer, as though it were trying to catch him unaware or read the letter held firmly in his fingers. It crept closer, inching forward slowly.

Harry could feel the presence just behind his elbow.

The teenager whirled quickly, knocking a small figure to the creaky floor. As if by magic, a holly wand suddenly appeared in Harry's hand, even though it had been all the way across the room, on his bedside table. Without hesitation, he pointed it at the shocked creature.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" Harry stared at the being as it shakily rose to its quivering knees. His forceful glare took in the bat-like ears. The clean and neatly pressed tea toga. And large, luminous eyes.

It was a house-elf. But not Dobby.

"Peachy is sorry, master wizard!" the creature cried in a rather squeaky and androgynous voice. "I wills punish me!" It raised its small head forcefully and made as if to bash its head against the worn floorboards, and only Harry's quick reflexes prevented the action's completion.

"NO!" the teenager stated forcefully, his green eyes gleaming. "No punishment."

"I musts, master wizard. I is failed in my mission. I is seen by you. I is betraying and spying on you!" The house-elf started to sob. Its large eyes brimmed with tears. It again moved to bash its head, but Harry's hand stayed the action.

"NO!" Emerald eyes shimmered with power.

The house-elf froze completely, an expression of absolute terror on its face.

“There will be NO punishment. And don’t call me master! I am just Harry,” he calmly stated, power echoing in his words.

“Yes, mas... Harry, sir.” The little house-elf trembled, and its tiny hands clenched the tea toga and wrung nervously. “My master doesn’t like to punish either,” it informed him slowly, finding a knot on the floorboards very interesting. “Sos it should be okay.”

The Gryffindor raised an eyebrow at that bit of information but momentarily chose to file it away. “Now, what is your name?” Harry asked instead, using a very gentle tone. He idly wondered if the house-elf was male or female.

“Peachy, sir!” it answered, its very large eyes finally meeting the young man’s green ones.

“And what is your mission, Peachy?” Harry kindly intoned, still trying to figure out if the little being was male or female.

“I is to watch you, Harry sir. And to--” the house-elf again froze, wringing its hands.

“Yes?” the teenager questioned softly, magic in his voice. A fire burned in his eyes.

“And to tells my master all of what you do, sir.” Peachy looked as though he, or was it she, might cry at any moment. No doubt due to ever-increasing the emerald flame in Harry’s gaze.

“Who...” the Gryffindor paused.

Brilliant and still very fiery eyes flicked to the elf’s tea toga. On the left side, just above the heart, was a crest. There were four animals: eagle, lion, badger, and serpent. And each was on different colored background.

The Hogwarts crest.

Harry breathed, "Dumbledore!"

"Yes, Harry sir. Master Dumbledore is my master!" the elf answered with something bordering on awe. Apparently, it was very surprised that Harry had managed to figure out the mystery without any clues.

The fire intensified, blazing with power. Then, suddenly... it disappeared.

"Thank you for being honest, Peachy. You may return to your master now."

"I mays, Harry sir?" it asked, face broadcasting surprise.

"Yes." A mysterious gleam appeared in the young man's gaze. "And be sure to mention that you spoke with me."

"As you command, Harry sir!" it whispered nervously, bowing very low despite the Gryffindor's peeved expression. With a quick snap of its thin fingers, the house-elf disappeared.

Emerald fire returned full force.

Harry fumed. He couldn't believe that Dumbledore would send a house-elf to spy on him! That is what the Order members outside were for!

Green eyes blazed brighter.

The sheer nerve of that man made him grind his teeth. He clenched his trembling hands. Harry could feel his rage growing. His magic rose up within him, a fiery surge of pure energy trying to escape...

But it didn't.

The blazing surge receded, leaving behind a tingling sensation and a great warmth.

Harry had controlled his power.

Afterwards, he quietly sank onto the rickety desk chair. He sat, lost in thought, for several moments. And then, the teenager breathed deeply, a sly smile forming on his lips. The mysterious gleam returned to his eye. A plan had already begun to brew in his mind.

To everyone who reviewed: Thanks!

Special thanks to Hobbit-Tabby and DracoQueen for the beta.

Chapter Four: Within Plain Sight

Ever Hopeful,

Azar

Updated and Edited:

05/31/08

Chapter Four: Within Plain Sight

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Faculty Library: Mid Autumn, 962 A.D.

Red and gold swirled in a wave of molten color, and deep blue eyes flashed. Perfectly frustrated teeth ground together, while a petite body trembled with annoyance. A heavy tome slammed onto an oak table. A comfortable leather chair slid away from said table, but the shaking figure did not rise.

Rowena Ravenclaw was not happy.

At a little over four months pregnant, her mornings were spent with continuous waves of nausea and constant sickness, and her thin, bony fingers were regularly swelling to twice their normal size. She was being plagued by odd aches and pains. Some were sharp. Some throbbing. Some even seemed to be burning. Nevertheless, all were painful. Inexplicably, or rather the opposite, her favorite clothing seemed to be becoming much too tight.

These, however, were not the cause of Rowena's ire. In fact, she didn't even seem to notice any of it. All her attention, all her focus was on a swirling, blue amulet.

"Calm down, Row! It does us no good if you are upset," a soothing voice stated, coming up behind her. Gentle hands began to rub circles on the woman's back, and the candlelight gleamed off of the bronzed skin of her companion.

Rowena inhaled sharply, eyes widening in surprise. "Siobhan," she breathed, "I didn't know that you were in here!" She twisted in her chair and exhaled in a rush. "You shouldn't sneak up on people like that!"

Siobhan smiled. "I did not sneak." She tossed her head dramatically, but her face sparked merrily. "I have been calling to you for several moments, but you were... er... preoccupied."

“Humph!” Rowena snorted. “It’s this damnable amulet!” Her nostrils flared in contempt. “Or rather the inscription on the back,” she growled with guarded eyes. “I have looked through countless books. I have searched through parchment and scrolls. I’ve even read the blasted stone tablets.” She threw her hands into the air dramatically. “For the love of nature and all that grows, I must have pulled dozens of writings from the shelves, but I still cannot translate the inscription!” Rowena tossed her head, her fiery mane whirling around her. “I have yet to even identify the language!”

The other woman’s face took on an expression of complete surprise. “You don’t even know the language? I thought that you at least knew it was related to Parsel writing.” Her eyes narrowed suspiciously. “Why did you not ask for help? I would have been more than happy to assist. And surely, Sal or Helga--”

Rowena interrupted her, “Everyone was so busy, especially with school going full force.” She shrugged, her shoulders sagging slightly. “You and Salazar have the baby to worry over. Helga and Edmund have their own concerns with their brood. And with your mother ill, all four of you have a whole other set of responsibilities. Plus,” she carried on, rolling her eyes, “who knows where Godric is right now? Honestly, he keeps mysteriously disappearing. I believe that he might be having clandestine affair!” She chortled at the thought, quite taken with the idea of Gryffindor finally having a lover.

“And Quinn?” Siobhan inquired softly, coming around to the side.

The redhead hesitated at the mention of her loving husband. “He has been helping, but with my pregnancy, he has been taking over more and more of my responsibilities.” She flicked a strand of curls off of her shoulder. “He barely has enough time as it is. Sal has even taken over some of the slack to give him more time. And...” She hesitated.

“And what?” the blonde questioned.

Rowena looked distinctly uncomfortable. “Well, Quinn is starting to act so paranoid! He will only let me teach a few of my classes--”

Siobhan interrupted her with a chuckle, lips twitching as she tried to cover her mouth. "Yes, first time fathers can be a bit... overprotective."

"I've noticed," the redhead stated dryly. "But Salazar wasn't half this bad!" she added, emphasizing her point with her hands.

Siobhan smirked darkly, looking a bit too much like Quinn for the other woman's comfort. "Let's just say that Sal was... persuaded not to be!" Her crystal eyes flashed.

"Persuaded?" Rowena questioned skeptically. "How did you ever manage that?"

"With the a few choice hexes." The blonde's smirk deepened.

"Hexes?" An expression of complete confusion crossed Ravenclaw's face. However, her head swiftly snapped up with sudden understanding. "You hexed him!"

"Yes!" the blonde answered and grinned wickedly.

Rowena paused for a moment, but her lips quickly curled into a satisfied grin as she sniffed. Unexpectedly, she began to laugh, imaging both the look on Sal's face and some of the spells his wife had probably used against him. Siobhan wasn't a Master of Charms for nothing.

Siobhan, in turn, gazed at her friend in bewilderment before starting to chortle as well.

"If Sal was half as bad as Quinn, I cannot really blame you," Rowena wheezed after a second. Her face started to redden as she tried to breathe between chuckles. "I can just see it now." She mimed like she was reaching for her wand and cursing an imaginary Salazar Slytherin.

At this, Siobhan began to laugh even harder. She collapsed into an empty chair facing Rowena, her small hands clutching her now aching sides.

"You should have seen the look on his face the first time." Siobhan gasped for breath.

"Oh, I can imagine," Rowena inserted between laughs, eyes glittering with unshed tears. "I might just have to borrow your idea and use it on Quinn!"

"Aye. I would like to see that!" Siobhan smirked, her sides heaving as she tried to draw in air. She shook her head, leaning an elbow against the table.

Rowena blinked rapidly several times and wiped tears of mirth from her eyes, and she took a deep breath, her gaze taking a serious gleam. "Thank you, my friend," she whispered, "for lightening my heart."

Siobhan smiled and winked. "I believe it could do with more lightening," she replied gravely, but her smile never faltered. She held her hand out to her friend. "Come with me."

Rowena glanced around, indecision clearly written on her face. "I really should continue--" she began, but a shake of Siobhan's head stilled the statement. The redhead hesitated for another moment but eventually linked her hand to her friend's tanned one.

As the two women rose and walked arm in arm to the door, a large book left a distant shelf. It floated gently through the air toward the previously occupied table. Scrolls lying forgotten in a dark corner lifted and soon joined. A cracked and almost illegible tablet rose, following the path of the other objects.

Yet, the women, so intent on their destination, were oblivious to it all. They never saw any of it. Nor did they notice the increased glow of a swirling, blue amulet.

Hogwarts, Potions Master's Laboratory: The Same Night

In a deep and not so dark dungeon of Hogwarts Castle, a half-dozen cauldrons bubbled happily. Blue, green, and even neon pink were all visible within. Potion ingredients such as herbs, plant parts, and unrecognizable animal specimens all lined the stone walls.

A man with thick, black hair that was graying with dignity at the temples sat at a large desk. Several essays lay scattered about him, and his spidery fingers held a large, eagle quill, scratching at a parchment in front him. He smirked to himself as a snarky comment was added to the margin of an essay, immediately followed by a few more. He glanced from the writing to the two people at a nearby table, who were leaning over a cauldron and snickering to themselves. His smirk deepened.

A rather young student with surprisingly nimble fingers was carefully chopping ingredients, eyes intent on his work. Beside him stood another man, who was clearly supervising. He was older but still quite young in his own right, and he casually and seemingly at random threw a few ingredients into the bubbling green-brown liquid. After a moment, the boy finished cutting up his basil and showed it to his professor.

“Excellent, Elgin,” the man commented with a grin. His gaze flickered to the third person sitting at the desk. “I knew there was a reason why you prepare the ingredients, while Quinn – our ever-loved Potions master – is forced to grade papers,” he intoned mischievously. “Your Aunt Helga will surely be pleased,” Salazar added.

Although his eyes remained upon his work, Elgin nodded his head and smiled, his grin very reminiscent of another Hufflepuff. The boy turned to his next ingredient, willow bark, and reached for his mortar and pestle.

Quinn, however, glanced up. He mocked snarled, “Why, Salazar, I did not know you were so very amusing.”

Salazar beamed. “Apparently, I am not the only one with a sense of humor.” Green eyes gleamed with a hint of mischief. “I only wished for you to relax.” He took a deep breath. “You would think that Rowena was due any day instead of several months from now.

You've been somewhat difficult with her as of late, as you undoubtedly know."

The older man's lips thinned aggressively. "I most certainly have not. I merely insured that she was taking adequate care of herself and our child--"

Sal interrupted, "Yes, you have." He hesitated, breathing out loudly. "See, my friend, just now. Even when you are simply speaking of the baby, you become difficult... overprotective." Slytherin sighed, slender fingers raking through his dark hair. "You must calm yourself, Quinn. Put a stop to this, or else she will employ Siobhan's method of persuasion." His mouth pulled distastefully.

Quinn frowned and gave the other man a questioning look. "And what exactly would that method be?"

Salazar shrugged and turned away, crossing his arms over his chest in a defensive gesture. "Trust me, dear friend, when I say you do not want to know." He grimaced. "Ever," the man finished, turning his attention back to Elgin, who had mutely listened to the exchange.

Quinn growled, not unpleasantly, and returned to his grading. Yet, his eyes remained fixed ahead of him, and he chewed on the end of his quill. He was clearly thinking about what Sal had said.

Salazar, in turn, glanced back a final time before he returned his full attention to Elgin. "Now, tell me," he asked his student, fighting the urge to smirk in triumph as he discretely glanced at the other man. "Why must we add the rosemary?"

Hogsmeade Wizarding Village, Home of Amia Hawthorne: The Same Night

Within her warm and inviting home, Amia Hawthorne lay dying. It was a wasting disease, sucking the very life from her. Every day, her eyes lost a little of their sparkle and her face became even more wane than it already was. Quite a feat as she was exceedingly emaciated, little more than skin and bones.

There was no cure. The Healers were not even sure what ailed her. It had come upon her so suddenly. In the early autumn, she had been completely healthy, bright and full of energy. Now, barely three months later, she fought desperately to live. The Healers had never heard of such a thing, and therefore, they could do nothing. For nothing, not even magic, could rid her of her ailment. It could only alleviate the pain, make Amia forget for a few short hours.

Nonetheless, everyday Amia deteriorated. The pain worsened daily. Everyday Amia struggled harder. A little more life left her every day. It was almost as if her very life force was being drained, being pulled away.

Currently, the Hawthorne matriarch laid dazedly within her bed, in the state between wakefulness and dreaming. Her sea-green eyes were half open, fixed on the ceiling. In the background, a fire crackled merrily, heating the room. But it did nothing to warm her. The chill of death was too powerful to be overcome.

Next to her bed, gentle-faced woman sat within a rocking chair. She hummed soothingly to Amia and stared distantly into the fire, her expression covered with shadows. The firelight glittered on her hair, casting red shadows in the normally brown locks and making her head look ablaze. Her wondrous and gentle fingers rested upon Amia's brow, rubbing soothingly. She exhaled and several tears rolled down cheek. She didn't even try to wipe them away.

In the corner, a man was fast asleep, his chair leaning against the wall. He quietly mumbled, speaking within his own dream world. And his head began to loll to the side, causing his remaining hair to fall onto his worried face. With each breath and each whisper, his hair puffed out softly into the air and floated lazily back to his face. His rather prominent nose twitched comically as the strands landed. He sneezed and awoke with a start. And his eyes, which were so much like his mother's, sleepily flicked about the room.

At the noise, the lady in the chair turned, her expression filling with surprise and concern. Green eyes met brown.

“Go back to sleep, love,” the woman whispered. “It is not yet your turn to watch.”

“How is she?” the man asked, all traces of sleep gone from his face.

“The same. No worse.” A wane smile appeared on her face, throat tight and eyes glittering with tears. “But no better.”

The man made as to rise, but he was stopped with a glance. “Helga,” he murmured.

She shook her head and toyed with a bracelet on her wrist. “Go back to sleep, Edmund, or else you will be unable to watch her later. She will need you then.”

Edmund stared at her for a moment, studying her tired face. He nodded and closed his eyes, but he twitched uncomfortably in the chair. But within minutes, his breathing evened, and he was again dreaming.

Helga gazed at her husband for several long moments until she sighed heavily and turned away. She peered warily around the room, taking in the crackling fire, the warm rugs on the floor, and the sick and dying woman curled within the bed. Her gaze traveled to the window on the near wall; it was far darker outside than it should be. Perhaps a storm was coming.

The brunette slowly stood and glided to the window, dark eyes gazing toward the sky before a sudden movement on the street outside caught her attention. It was a cloaked figure, a man, moving stealthily but quickly toward the seedier part of the village. Hateful energy shrouded him, pushing away all the friendly shadows of the night, black rage wrapped so tightly that all other feelings were stifled. The man walked stiffly but swiveled his hips in a definite strut. He carried himself with arrogance and anger, and Helga spotted this much in an instant. She had seen both often enough as of late.

Lightning flashed, casting partial light onto the man, but Helga could still not see his face. He stopped momentarily, and his head tilted

skyward. She moved quickly to the side of the window, hiding in the shadows.

It would not do to be seen spying.

But the man shook his head and continued on his way, Helga watching all the while. There was something familiar about this man. His gait, his movements... were so very familiar.

Her lips twisted suspiciously, a cold sense of dread rising within her.

Hogsmeade: The Same Night

The wind whispered. It ripped through the streets, tearing at a wooden sign on a shabby building. Seething clouds arose and rumbled, blocking out the twinkling stars. An arc of pure light lanced across the sky.

A storm was coming.

Darkness shrouded a cloaked figure as did anger. He walked stiffly, arrogantly, as though he owned the entire street and the very village it went through. The friendly shadows of the night trembled and drew back as he swaggered by. Wrath itself cloaked him as he walked.

A spear of light crossed the sky, and the man paused just beyond a well-lit home and looked upward towards the stars. He stared for a moment, an arrogant sneer tugging at his thin lips. The man haughtily tossed his head and continued down the street. A feeling of pure malice permeated the air around him.

A great evil would take hold this night.

The man approached a dingy building, quite new but still dirty. An equally filthy sign hung precariously above the ill-fitting wooden door, and it pictured a severed hog's head in a pool of blood. The wind increased, twirling dust and dirt about the man as he entered the building.

The floor of the establishment was dirt. Yet, that fact was impossible to tell under the filth that had accumulated. A conglomeration of candles lay upon various surfaces, providing the only light, save that from the dying fire in the stone hearth. A surprisingly well-kept bar lined an entire wall of the room. And an older man with graying hair stood behind it, a rag in his callused hands, wiping the surface.

The cloaked man marched to the barkeep and barked his order. As he ungraciously waited for his drink, his strangely glittering eyes searched the dimly lit room. The metallic orbs flitted over the few patrons, clearly focusing on the corners. He noted the amber-haired man in the near one before turning his attention to another figure. He quickly paid for his drink and made his way to the other darkened corner and the person within it.

He, or possibly even she, was also cloaked. But in blood red with a black robe peeking out underneath. He sat, back to the walls, facing the door. A deep, red liquid sloshed as his fingers gripped a glass and brought it to the unsteady table. The only greeting he gave his new tablemate was a sharp nod.

Instead, he turned to look at a dingy mirror on the near wall that glittered in the dim light, and the interesting scene it showed. For while the table, spindly chairs, and drinks were featured in the cracked glass, only one person was in the image.

“You have what I seek?” a harsh voice questioned.

The table’s occupant focused on the newcomer. The stranger sat and pulled his cloak forward carefully so that it would not drag on the earthen floor. The second man nodded. Spidery fingers pulled back the deep, red cloak and reached within his robe, producing a sheathed dagger. His fingertips danced along its length, pulling it completely free. Light shimmered along its length, showing the runes etched on the metal.

The stranger smirked maliciously. “Excellent,” he purred, metallic eyes glowing. “And it will serve my purpose?”

"Yes," a rich voice, obviously male, answered. "It will suffice," the words continued, voice sounding sophisticated and cultured. "But to prevent a return, he..." The man paused, considering his words carefully before continuing. "The... ah... victim must die. It must be a deathblow." He resheathed the athame and gently laid it upon the wobbly table.

"And he will never return," the newcomer interrupted.

"Only if summoned; that will break the enchantment, and he will... progress normally."

At these words the first man stiffened, tossing his head angrily. But before he could respond the second man continued.

"But from what you say, no one will want for him to return." The original occupant paused, an unreadable emotion visible in his silvery gaze. "And from what you have planned, no one will even know he is dead and gone. So there is no need to worry."

The stranger thought for a moment and then nodded. His hand went to his cloak and produced a bag filled with coins. He ceremoniously tossed it upon the table, the fingers of the other male catching the bag before it even touched the surface. He, in turn, looked at the bag curiously, glancing towards his companion.

The first man simply laughed and scooped up the dagger. "For your troubles," he responded smoothly.

The second did not look convinced. "And my silence?" he questioned rather sarcastically.

The newcomer simply inclined his head, hand traveling to his drink. He held it up in a toast. The other reluctantly raised his own glass, liquid swirling inside.

"A pleasure," the first saluted, smiling and causing shivers to shoot up his companion's spine.

Regardless, the second remained impassive, but a slight flicker of emotion appeared across his face. 'I am only doing this for the others,' he thought miserably, 'for the innocents... for those who have died.'

His gaze traveled to his companion, who was currently studying the athame with interest. The red-cloaked man shuddered faintly, an odd feeling of dread surfacing within him. He had a sudden urge to snatch the dagger back and to renege on their deal, but he ignored the feeling. A slight breeze passed through the bar, tugging at his cloak and making him shiver again. It were as if Fate herself had just passed by, leaving him behind in disappointment.

The second and still trembling man quickly finished his drink and left his chair, gracefully rising to his feet. He nodded and made for the door, pausing to look back before he exited. He sighed heavily, squashing his earlier urge.

'Now is not the time for reluctance,' he thought as he pushed open the wooden door. He looked back a final time before quickly leaving.

The first figure remained for another moment, an evil look crossing his face. His eyes gleamed with an unholy light.

In a far corner, another man was quietly drinking. His head was cocked to one side, deepening the shadows on his face. His molten eyes glinted angrily. Though he was quite far away, the man had heard every whisper of the pair. He had grimaced with each malice-filled word. He snarled slightly, showing his enlarged canine teeth. He shook his head, and his hands clenched the tabletop hard enough to leave large gouges. He rose, ignoring the rest of his drink.

He now had more important matters to see to.

Hogwarts, Faculty Library: Several Weeks Later

Two women bent over several large pieces of parchment. The first, a redhead, idly traced her fingertip along a line of text, scowling as she read it. The other, a golden blonde, sat back and ran a very tired hand over her face before leaning forward again.

Nearby, countless books and a single stone tablet were scattered across an oaken table, but all attention was focused on a single volume. The two sets of blue eyes, one azure and the other very pale, continuously moved from the parchment to the tome. On a far corner of the table, there was a glittering, blue amulet.

One of the women sighed. "Siobhan," she muttered, "how goes your translation?"

"Fine." The other glanced up, her gaze questioning. "Why? What is it, Rowena?" she inquired, pausing to stretch her aching back.

"This part is odd," stated Rowena, indicating her portion of the translation. She was clearly puzzled. "It appears to be written in verse form, almost like a poem."

Unbeknownst to the two, the talisman began to churn faster. It faintly started to glow.

Siobhan's eyebrows rose in clear surprise. She hesitated for a moment before murmuring, "What does it say?" She ran her bronze hand over her face once again.

The amulet glowed brighter.

"Time is my ally. I fear not death."

AN: This chapter takes place in what is now December. Also, slowly the elements of everything should start to pull together in a logical fashion. At least, I hope so.

To everyone who reviewed: Thanks!

Special thanks to Hobbit-Tabby and DracoQueen for the beta.

Chapter Five: Righting a Wrong

Ever Hopeful,

Azar

Updated and Edited:

05/31/08

Chapter Five: Righting a Wrong

Hogsmeade Wizarding Village, Hog's Head Tavern: Late January, 1977 A.D.

Not much had changed in the millennium since the opening of the Hog's Head. The floor was still dirt, and it was still impossible to see said floor under the filth. Only now, it was the grime of several centuries, instead of several years. The only light in the establishment remained unchanged, still coming from an assortment of candles and the embers of a perpetually dying fire. Even the type of clientele had not changed. The cloaked and shadowed people continuously found refuge in the Hog's Head.

But there was another far more important thing that remained unchanged within the tavern. Sitting within a darkened corner was a shrouded figure. He sat quietly, sipping at a deep, red liquid within a wine glass. Occasionally, he would stir, disturbing the scarlet-red cloak that covered his body. Even after one thousand years, whenever Dominic de Dorée visited the village, he always stopped in for a drink.

Of course, his preferred drink was not alcohol related, like many of the other patrons, but rather blood.

Dom was a vampire, after all, so to each his own.

Dominic sat silently, lost in thought. Whenever he journeyed to a familiar place, memories of the past would always resurface. One in particular always came to mind when he was in this particular tavern, and it was not a pleasant recollection. Sure, he had provided the means to the eventual death and disensoulment of an evil man, but Dom still felt guilty.

Many mortals would scoff at the idea of a guilt ridden vampire, especially if the remorse was a result of death. However, vampires were much more than most people even realized. Few would ever drink of humans or other sentient creatures. Those that did, only took what was willingly given. For, of course, everyone knew that to take it

forcefully was to lace the life-giving substance with fear and violence, making it taste foul. Blood was much sweeter when offered freely.

Taking a life was different for his kind, for vampires. They remembered almost everything. One of the many benefits, or rather curses, of their kind. The recollections of each life taken were pooled into a vampire's subconscious until it was impossible to distinguish where the memories ended and the real world began.

Certainly, vampires like all living things needed to eat, to have nourishment, but they did not require the flesh of others to survive, only the blood. They were not forced to kill in order to live. So they would drink lightly, enough for them to be sated and for the other to live. Except in rare cases, a vampire only killed in defense of self or others.

And that was how Dominic had justified his actions. He was defending others; he had ensured that an evil was slain.

‘But I did not have to curse him,’ Dom reflected remorsefully, jaded eyes gleaming in the candlelight. ‘I did not have to banish him eternally to the realm between life and death, into limbo. I did not have to stop him from being reborn, from living again.’ Guilt, fierce and true, rose up even stronger within him. ‘From making amends.’

Dom continued to sit, staring off into the distance. Every few minutes, he absentmindedly sipped his drink. He was so lost in thought that he did not even notice when it was all but finished and that he was sipping air instead of liquid. After almost an hour of quiet contemplation, Dom finally rose, swirling his cloak out behind him. His hand went to a pocket of his robe, producing two bronze coins, both of which were laid upon the wooden table. He moved from his chair toward the door and to the outside. He nodded smoothly to the barkeep, swiftly exiting the building.

Dom strode down the cobblestone street, cloak billowing behind him. His thoughts still churned in his head, old and ever present remorse raging in his mind. The wind picked up, scattering the few remaining

dry and dead leaves. High above him, the perpetually twinkling stars sparkled and shined.

‘I wish that I could change it,’ Dominic thought wistfully, rubbing his face with his hand. ‘I wish that I could give him another chance. Everyone deserves a second chance.’

An arc of color danced across the sky, a shooting star. Nevertheless, the vampire didn’t see it as his eyes were fixed on the ground.

Dominic continued down the road, mind oddly blank after such a confession. He passed several darkened but friendly homes, all snugly secure with sleeping inhabitants. The man swiveled his head, eyes easily taking in all of the sights, even with the surrounding darkness. To his right, in a stand of tall trees, he noted a faint and colorless light. Pausing for a moment, he turned slightly, approaching the foliage. He strolled to the very edge of the wood, hesitant to enter.

The wind tugged at the hood of his cloak, pulling it back from his pale face. Deep brunet hair that was so dark to be almost black floated in the breeze. A pair of eyebrows scrunched, and indecision was clearly written on Dom’s face.

‘It could be those crazed Death Eaters!’ he thought forebodingly, growing far more uneasy. While vampires were Dark, they were most certainly not evil, quite unlike the new Dark Lord and his followers.

However, a tiny voice within Dom admonished the idea, ‘Why would Death Eaters be putting on a light show in the middle of the woods, mere meters from Hogsmeade?’

The vampire considered his own question, looking at the puzzle from all angles. On one hand, it really could be the Death Eaters, most likely preparing to attack Hogsmeade. On the other, it could be something else entirely. Perhaps it was a few students from the school out of bounds or maybe a ritual for the upcoming holiday.

Finally, after many moments of indecision, his soft voice whispered to the wind. "Should I?" he asked his favorite element, calling on it to guide him right.

The light breeze increased, blowing strongly against his back. It tugged at his cloak, all but pulling it and him toward the trees. Another ferocious gust soon joined in and pushed Dom forward, into the woods.

"I will take that as a yes," he stated with a noticeable smirk. A hand went to a pocket of his wizarding robe, producing a willow wand, while with his other he gathered magic. "Just in case," he murmured to both the wind and himself, pulling more power into his awaiting palm. "One can never be too careful, and I might need the extra boost." His silvery eyes gazed into the trees, using the mysterious light to discern between shadows and solid objects.

He walked slowly and silently, carefully avoiding the noisy branches and leaves scattered across the ground. The vampire went deeper into the wood, searching for the elusive source of light. Finally, after several minutes, Dom approached a clearing that was lit up as bright as day. Yet, eerily it was completely empty of people, save himself. The source of the light seemed to be coming from the ground in the very center of the area. Dominic gripped his wand tighter as he cautiously approached the light source, only to notice that a strangely shimmering blue jewel was upon the ground.

He carefully studied the glowing stone, watching as it flowed and ebbed as though water was trapped within the crystal. Etched on the top was a metallic bird, complete with unfurled wings.

After a few heartbeats, Dom tucked his wand back within his robes. He then bent down and grasped the object... Only to find himself lying on the cold, hard ground, staring at the starry sky an undeterminable amount of time later.

He groaned loudly, attempting to sit up. The vampire tried to place both palms firmly on the dying grass in order to push himself upwards. But this attempt also failed, for clasped firmly within one was a merrily sparkling, blue amulet.

Dom moaned again, suddenly remembering exactly how he had ended up on the ground and what had transpired to put him there. A single touch of this odd talisman had shown him the truth.

He had cursed and banished an innocent man.

Feeling that it just wasn't his day, he scowled more at himself than at stone. "Alright," he acquiesced, "I will do as I should have done centuries ago."

The stone, rather happily, glowed brighter.

Dom merely sighed, shaking his head. After several abortive attempts, he finally stood. The brunet hurriedly placed the amulet within his robes before dusting himself off. Thinking that he had best hurry, he used a trickle of magic and disappeared with a small and barely noticeable musical pop. He had places to go, people to see, and souls to bring back to life.

The English Countryside: Early May, 1977 A.D.

The stars twinkled brightly and quite merrily within the velvety sky. A soft breeze blew through the countryside, rustling the spring leaves. High atop a meadowed hill, a diamond of protection sat within a circle of summoning.

The points of the diamond were represented by glowing runes etched onto stone. Each was a different color, standing for different elements and cardinal directions: the yellow of air facing east, red of fire going south, blue for water pointing west, and green of earth facing north. The circle was complete and perfectly formed, glowing a mysterious white. It fully encircled the diamond, touching each of the points. Off to the side, a neatly folded red cloak sat along with a well-filled traveling pack and an enormous stack of books. Most were from his own personal collection, but a number had been temporarily liberated from his workplace. However, he wasn't worried that anyone would question why the books were missing, especially not when considering the fact that no else had high enough clearance to even look at them without his permission.

In the very center of the diamond, Dominic de Dorée knelt among the spring flowers. A faint coating of frost covered his robe, a sharp contrast to the warm, spring night. His skin was exceptionally pale, whiter than the twinkling stars above. Even for a vampire, Dom looked pale. He appeared... well, he looked dead.

The wind picked up, blowing sharply into his face, but of course, Dom didn't notice. His mind was elsewhere, deep within another plane of existence, the plane of death. He was, after all, attempting to summon Salazar Slytherin back to the land of the living. The key word, however, was attempting.

Dom's mind had finally found his quarry, deep within the plane but oddly separate from it, an eternity after his search had started. He pulled gently on the wispy resemblance of Salazar Slytherin, freeing him from the chains encircling him. The soul slowly followed, easing its way out of death and into life, where Dom could completely free him and direct him to be reborn.

The vampire and his odd companion evaded any guardians present and passed the gates, which by some grand design were meant to keep souls going forward into death, not back as Dom was headed. Forward meant a resting place, be it heaven or hell or something in between, where a soul would rest or languish for a time before returning to life. Yet, Dom could not venture that way, unless he wished to be completely reborn as well. Only certain things, particular beings, were allowed to move about indiscriminately. Necromancers such as him were not one of them. It took a special sort to do that.

So he had been forced to settle for the backdoor equivalent of death.

Eventually, after what seemed another eternity, but was most likely only seconds in the living world, Dom approached his goal. Yet, just as both reached the shaded area, the line between life and death, a wall of pure magic slammed between them. It threw Dominic back into life and Salazar back into the margins of death.

High atop the hill, silvery eyes flew open, and Dom inhaled deeply. He suddenly growled, gnashing his teeth together.

“It did not work! How could it not work!?” Dom practically howled in frustration, his face hardening and lips curling into a distinctive sneer. “I know I countered all of the runes on the athame! I know I did!” His hands traveled to his head, tightly pulling on his hair. “Bloody Hell! Even after ten centuries, I still remember all the damn runes I used on the blasted thing!” He rose rather forcefully to his feet and began stomping around the white circle of summoning.

He paced around the circle, attempting to discover his error. He stomped around the circumference several times, kicking several rocks out of the way and muttering curses to himself in Gaelic, Latin, and a few languages that were probably extinct. While his pacing may not have helped Dom discern his mistake, it did alleviate his fury.

‘I most definitely remember all of the runes,’ he carefully thought after he had managed to calm down. ‘Vampiric memory is good for some things, after all.’ A tired hand traveled to his face, he idly began rubbing his chin, lost in thought. ‘And Godric knew next to nothing about runes; that is why I had to make the bloody athame in the first place,’ the vampire added with a hint of bitterness. ‘Godric could not have modified the dagger.’

He did another full walk around the circle, almost stepping in a hole along the way.

‘So what went wrong?’ Dom pondered, dodging the same hole. ‘I know that I am not the most brilliant necromancer, but I do have some skill. The only thing that could completely block my efforts would be if some other form of magic was interfering.’ The man hesitated in his pacing, a shadow crossing his normally handsome face. ‘It would have to be powerful... and long lasting. But what kind of spell fits?’

He stared off into space for several moments, thinking hard. ‘Well,’ his mind began, ‘a blood curse--’

His train of thought came to a crashing halt. His eyes widened with surprise, and Dom nodded with a sudden burst of inspiration. He remembered hearing that mentioned before.

He hurriedly left the circle, momentarily breaking the ring of magic. Dominic strode straight to the stack of books, lifting the first one he came upon. He rapidly flipped pages, going to the index. He searched through the entries before finally discarding the text and throwing it over his shoulder. He picked up a second one, his eyes were almost a blur as they read, soon discarding it as well. He automatically reached for another, opening it hastily. He repeated the entire process several more times, until finding the desired passage:

The Sangre Effect:

First noted in the early first century by the famous necromancer La Muerte, this effect only applies to those cursed by a blood relative, while also under necromantic influence. Although the effect can take many forms, all involve the cursed remaining under the necromantic influence or spell, regardless of the duration of the original enchantment, unless released by another member of the bloodline.

The most notable case was that of Denethor of Tirith who remained under the effect for almost five centuries. After burning his youngest son alive, Denethor was cursed by his remaining children and his estranged sister. This curse coupled with a preexisting necromantic spell, involving Denethor's rebirth as a flobberworm, led to a most interesting happenstance. Denethor was perpetually reincarnated into flobberworms until a descendant of his original line took pity and released him...

His eyes lifted from the book.

The Sangre Effect? A blood curse?

Dom considered for a moment. Which of his relatives had Salazar pissed off enough for that?

He again glanced down at the page. 'I guess it does not matter now,' the vampire mused whimsically. 'But to free Salazar, I will need a

blood relative.' A small smirk appeared on Dom's lips, 'I will need an heir of the line. An Heir of Slytherin.'

As quickly as the smirk formed, it soon vanished. Dominic exhaled slowly, sensing he was about to be involved in things he rather just avoid.

Sadly, there was only one known... person fitting that description.

St. Ottery: Early July, 1981 A.D.

The moon glowed peacefully, casting pale, pure light across the sleeping land. Numerous houses simmered faintly in the moonlight, but one in particular seemed to draw the mysterious orb's radiance. It was a nice home, simple but with character. It was situated within the countryside and encircled by trees, and lights from the distant village could be barely seen across the horizon. A large and extensive garden covered much of the backyard, extending all the way to the faraway tree line. The home was an interesting one, two storeys tall with a tower rising above. Still, it was not too large and far from small.

In a word, it was simply perfect.

Inside the home's well-lit kitchen, a lady with golden blonde hair held a wooden spoon. She stood next to a wall, near the hearth, stirring a heavy, iron kettle that was situated over a crackling fire. A safe distance away, in the near corner, sat a carriage-like piece of furniture, complete with infant inside. The baby was awake, her pale blue eyes staring dreamily at the enchanted ceiling of her carriage.

The woman turned abruptly as the baby suddenly sneezed, and she immediately strode to over, her grey robes swishing as she walked. She bent down, gently caressing the child's face with her unoccupied hand. Clearly, she was the child's mother.

The mother's hand traveled to the top of her daughter's head, soothing the gold and silver tresses. Yet, she paused in her movements at the sound of a faint knocking on the backdoor. She straightened, her deep eyes staring. Again, she heard the soft sounds

of a tap. Thinking that it was her husband playing some sort of joke, she stepped to the door and opened it.

Outside, just within the circle of light caused by the kitchen, there stood an unfamiliar man. He was richly dressed with a red cloak atop a tailored wizarding robe. Although no wand was visible, the woman immediately knew that he was magical.

“Greetings,” he stated in a cultured voice, smiling faintly. “My name is Dominic de Dorée. May I come in?”

The mother gazed attentively at him for a few seconds, searching for any sign of deception or danger. She carefully searched his face and eyes, but she found only honesty with a hint of sadness. Something deep within the woman, told her to trust him. Nonetheless, she twitched her left arm, causing a maple wand to fall from the holster on her wrist into her waiting hand. One could never be too careful during such trying times, after all.

“And may I inquire as to why you wish to enter?” the mother rebutted effortlessly.

An amused expression crossed Dom’s face. “I only wish to speak with you, and it is becoming rather chilly outside.”

The mother genuinely grinned, stepping back from the door. She nodded her head in acceptance, but Dom did not enter. She again gifted her guest with an inquiring look and hint of suspicion. Her eyes traveled to her child, who lay quietly in the carriage. However, the woman decided to trust her instincts, even though most logical thought went against them.

“Yes, you may enter,” she said, voice holding an odd note.

Dom bowed lightly to her, stepping inside. “My thanks, madam.”

The lady again nodded, intelligent gaze noting that her guest did not enter until given express permission. “Tell me, Mister Dorée,” she asked, turning to her guest, wand still firmly clasped in her hand.

“Why would a vampire wish entrance into my home, if only to speak with me?”

Dominic merely inclined his head as she correctly guessed his situation. He made no other movements, save to shift his hand to a pocket of his robes.

“Well, it is rather hard to explain why I am here,” the vampire answered, effortlessly pulling his hand from his robes. There was a blue amulet clasped tightly within his fist. “But I believe that this,” he stated, indicating the stone, “can help me explain.”

The mother stared in awe at the artifact. Without even realizing, she reached out to touch it. And with that single touch, the same thing that had happened to Dom, and to countless others no doubt, happened to her.

Memories, images of happenings long since past, flew through her mind. A distant but uplifting melody filled her ears, blocking out all other sound. A pure, pristine light filled the entire room.

But within seconds it, all of it was over. And it had changed everything.

The mother stood dazed and would have sunk to the floor had Dom not caught her. Great knowledge that she hadn’t possessed moments ago now filled her mind. It confused her endlessly.

Dom held her quietly for a few moments before easing the woman to her feet.

“But why here? Why bring it here?” she questioned, still partly dazed. She indicated the amulet, which still lay on Dom’ palm, with a hasty gesture. “Why not bring it back to him? To Salazar... or whoever he is now?”

The vampire just looked at her. “I cannot reach him. Those of my kind are said to be evil.” He sighed, anger and hurt in his expression. “They would never let one such as me near him,” Dom added bitterly.

His wary and somewhat jaded eyes turned to the now sleeping infant in the carriage. "Besides, the amulet is as much hers as it is his," he finished, the painful emotions draining from his face.

He moved his pale hand to the lady's bronze one, claspings it firmly. A mere second later, his hand pulled back, leaving the talisman within her hand. Dom backed away slowly and turned, heading for the door.

"It is hers," he murmured, exiting the house. "It will protect her, keep her safe." He left, closing the door with a click and was gone an instant later.

The mother stared after him for a few moments, lost in thought. Mechanically and quite unintentionally she moved to the carriage containing her tiny daughter. She studied the sleeping infant before returning to the ebbing jewel that was clutched in her hand.

"This is yours, my darling daughter," she whispered to the little girl, the amulet suddenly glowing brighter.

She sniffled, tears snaking their way down her face. A horrible and hopefully untrue prediction played in her mind.

"It will protect you, love," the mother added softly, "long after I am gone."

St. Ottery: Fifteen Years Later...

Much had changed to the house and to the family in the last fifteen years. The home, once a creamy white, was now a light, warm blue. Even the once dark foundation stones were now grayish, changed in order to match the rest. The garden was still well-cared for but now consisted of a weird variety of unnamable plants instead of the original flowers and vegetables.

And of the family itself, the lady of the household had died in a rather unfortunate and untimely accident, leaving her daughter and husband with only each other. The father had taken his wife's death rather hard, becoming distant and insular for a time. Yet, he had eventually

recovered, bringing his daughter and him closer together than ever before.

And, of course, the infant girl with dreamy eyes had grown into a lovely, young woman with a mysterious air about her.

The teenager in question sat upon her windowsill, left cheek against the cool glass. The pale light of the waning moon glittered along her hair, casting even more silver into it than normal. A loose braid hung down her back and seemed to glow in the ethereal light. The girl exhaled, pressing a very tanned hand to the glass. The gesture was childish, innocent-like, almost as if she were reaching for the moon. She sighed again, distractedly blinking her eyes and tracing the surface with her fingertip. She snuggled within her window seat, her nighttime refuge.

She had been plagued by odd dreams as of late. Remarkably strange, weird but wonderful dreams. The one this night had been exceptionally odd. Well, more peculiar than usual. It involved two men, both of who seemed vaguely familiar. It is possible that she knew them, but the girl could not recall from where. No matter how she tried.

“Maybe from a previous life,” she had lightly joked to herself.

She had not caught the name of the first man, but he was familiar nonetheless. He was an angry and haughty person, complete with an evil smile and dangerous pyrite eyes. But she had the sense that he had not always been that way. Once, there had been courage with a hint of pride instead of arrogance. And there had been camaraderie instead of jealousy.

The second man, however, she knew his name. She knew it very well. Just as she knew his dark hair and mischievous laugh. Green eyes and naughty grin.

The teenager exhaled and looked upwards, intently studying the moon as it partially disappeared between a wisp of cloud. “Salazar,” she whispered to it.

Her hand traveled to her neck and the metallic necklace encircling it. She inhaled very slowly, remembering his smile.

The moon again appeared, once more casting its silvery light. The girl shook her head, fingertips caressing the jewel about her neck. It flowed and ebbed much like water in the faint moonlight.

“His name is Salazar.”

AN: The Sangre Effect: Basically, this happens when a blood relation of a soul's current or, after they have died, most previous incarnation curses them with magic. This, coupled with the enchantments already on the athame, prevented anyone but another blood relative of Salazar from summoning him back. Basically, he was trapped in limbo until a descendent of the Slytherin line freed him.

Also, I bet that you can guess who had to summon Salazar back. Plus, to whom Dom originally wanted to give or rather return the amulet (winks and smiles)! Also, yes ... the mother did foresee her own death.

To everyone who reviewed: Thanks!

Special thanks to Hobbit-Tabby and DracoQueen for the beta and to Our Catholic Faith (online) for the Latin translation.

Chapter Six: Star Bright

Ever Hopeful,

Azar

Updated and Edited:

